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SUBJECT: SITREP 17: SECOND MONUC PRESS RELEASE CALLS FOR
KABILA-BEMBA MEETING

REF: KINSHASA 1329

MONUC followed its earlier exhortation today for a cessation of hostilities (reftel) with another press release calling on the belligerents to meet. This is Embassy's unofficial translation:

MONUC Calls on Two Presidential Election Candidates to Meet

Kinshasa, 22 August 2006. - "It is imperative for clashes to stop immediately and for the two presidential election candidates to meet urgently for the good of the democratic process and above all for the Congolese people, who have already suffered too much from armed conflict." Today, Mr. William Lacy Swing, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations in Democratic Republic of Congo, made this declaration before meeting with President Kabila late this morning, accompanied by member ambassadors of the International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT).

As for Vice-president Jean-Pierre Bemba, he is under the protection of MONUC, which deployed a sizeable security force around his residence. In an effort to restore peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo, MONUC and EUFOR positioned themselves between the belligerents and call for an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of forces engaged in the fighting.

The international community, for whom re-establishing peace and order in Kinshasa is priority, is redoubling its efforts to find a political solution to the current crisis, in the highest interest of the Congo.

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